Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris,

BY THE

REV. DR. SCADDING.

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THE CATHEDRAL OF NOTRE-DAME, PARIS.

Of the many interesting objects which strike the eye of the stranger in the gay capital of France, no one edifice perhaps leaves so distinct and vivid an impression on his memory as the Cathedral of Notre-Dame. Paris, it is true, presents numerous other ancient structures to his notice; but they all, more or less, have undergone such modifications and alterations, that the character of their original appearance is lost. Like an aged patriarch forsaken of his coevals, Notre-Dame stands alone amidst the city, a majestic monument of by-gone days, almost unchanged, except by the soft greyness shed over it by time, and as stately in its demensions as it was when the Sainted Louis assumed before its altar the pilgrim's garb.

For seven centuries now, the worship of the Most High has been with but little interruption carried on within the Precincts of this noble temple; and seven centuries more, should our globe remain unrenovated so long, would, to all appearance, scarce suffice to dissolve the solid masonry of its walls, or even affect the beautiful adjustments of its airy buttresses.

The foundation of the present building is ascribed to Maurice de Sully, Bishop of Paris, during the reign of Louis the Young. It occupies the site of a still more ancient Christian edifice, which Childebert is said to have raised on the ruins of a heathen temple, dedicated to Jupiter and Castor and Pollux, by the merchants of Paris in the time of the Emperor Tiberius. Although many additions and improvements were made during the three centuries succeeding the erection of the original structure, yet even as late as the middle of the fifteenth century the noble design was not as yet completed, and Kings and Bishops emulously endeavoured to perfect the majestic edifice.

The first serious injuries which it sustained, were inflicted in the Revolution; nor was it until after the Peace in 1815, that

these injuries were repaired, and the restoration of the building effected. Even now, although it is unquestionably one of the finest specimens of ecclesiastical architecture in the world, it is not what it was in the days of its glory. Time has stripped it of some of its attractions—and the destructive grasp of man has robbed it even of more. Many of the statues, pictures, and other costly decorations with which it was lavishly enriched by princes, ecclesiastics and corporations, shared the fate of other noble works of art in the excesses of the Parisian mob at the close of the last century; and of the five-and-forty chapels, which clustered round the nave and choir, but twenty-nine remain.

The general plan of the Cathedral is that of the Latin cross. The principal features of the western front are its massive towers, beneath whose shadow the Ile de la Cité seems to be reposing, the two exquisite ranges of delicately finished arches connecting them, between which is the magnificent circular window more than forty feet in diameter, and the three deep porches, ever beckoning inward those who approach. The most remarkable objects on the northern and southern sides are the transepts with their noble roses, decorated with statues and finely sculptured *basso relievi*. The Porch on the southern side bears the name of St. Marcel and occupies the site of the ancient church of St. Stephen. As you pass beyond the transepts towards the east, the building is gradually rounded off into a semicircle, adorned with a noble triple tier of windows, between which are suspended exquisitely delicate buttresses with slender shafts and graceful pinnacles.

Let us take a glance at the interior of the magnificent structure. We shall enter by the centre Porch in the western front. What a glorious view presents itself as we stand within the spacious nave ! The high o'er-arching firmament of the groined roof, dim with a rainbow-hued atmosphere, tinctured and dyed with the gorgeous colours of the glass that fills the rose-shaped apertures behind and on either side of us—the double range of lofty aisles with the richly decorated chapels opening behind them—the sublime perspective of clustered pillars and massive columns through which the eye gazes on—still on——until it reaches the far-distant *sacrarium* raised aloft towards the east,

glowing with a soft and delicate beauty, even more solemnly exquisite than anything else that has yet met the view.

As an historical edifice, also, how full of interest is the Cathedral of Notre-Dame! Treading upon the pavement which heroes have helped to wear, we feel an awe as if in their company—we realize their presence near us—we see them almost bodily around us. Could the beams out of the walls here speak, what revelations would they not deliver respecting events which written chronicles but too briefly describe! What catalogues of passionate thoughts—what prayers, what sorrows, what fears, what hopes, what raptures, what despair would they not be able to disclose to us, which these solemn aisles have been privy to!

To glance at all the reminiscences that flash upon the mind as we enter Notre-Dame, would fill a volume. Only one or two can here be touched upon.

Here was crowned a King of England as King of France. Here the quartering of the lilies with the lions was the symbol of a fact. Here for one brief hour the long-retained figment—real source of so many mutual woes to two great nations—was apparently a truth, that the English Monarch was King of Great Britain, France and Ireland. Well for England that the ambitious design of her rulers was frustrated! Had it succeeded, the British Isles would probably have constituted an obscure Province of France; and the high-toned national character of their people would have had no opportunity of developing itself. And perhaps no nation would have been found to take the stand in favor of liberty and truth which the three united British Kingdoms since have done. Little dreamed that royal youth, as he sat wrapped in ermine and weighed down with gold, of the series of dark contrasts afterwards to come upon him. How well it is for us that a veil is spread before our future! How truthful the words ———

> "Prudens futuri temporis exitum
> Caliginosa nocte premit Deus."

How often, else, would our moments of proudest triumph and highest bliss seem only cruel mockeries! In like manner,

little dreamed the beautiful and accomplished Mary Stuart, of such sad hours as afterwards Loch Leven and Fotheringay brought with them,—when yet a buoyant maiden, brilliant with youth, surrounded by the court and chivalry of France, within these walls she saluted her newly-wedded husband King of the Scots! Little dreaming was there of such bitter thoughts as those which the names of Carisbrook and Whitehall were afterwards to call up, when the fair Henrietta of France passed forth through yonder porch the happy bride of Charles the First! How can we help thus looking with the pitying eye of a seer upon the personages of history, as we behold them moving on, in certain parts of their career, unconscious of the fate that awaits them?

Even Napoleon, looked at in this point of view, amidst the splendours in which he indulged in Notre-Dame, claims our compassion. Napoleon, as is well-known, made this sacred place—sacred still, notwithstanding its profane rebaptism as the Temple of Reason a few years before—the scene of one of his most daring acts of self-glorification. It was here that he, consummate actor! took the newly made Imperial Chaplet from the altar, and placed it on his own brows—as if he designed by the act, at once to add poignancy to the humiliation of the unhappy Pontiff, whom he had forced to officiate at the ceremony, and to teach the thronging crowd how empty were the pretensions of the supposed vicar of Him by whom Kings reign.

The grand western façade of Notre-Dame, was, on that occasion, obscured by a triumphal arch in honor of himself, whereon the emblems of his name and rule were mingled in strange confusion with the statues of Clovis and Charlemagne. So well did he know how to put in practise the common trick of upstarts, who are ever fain to hoodwink the ignorant by attaching themselves in some adroit manner to ancient and popular names. Well for him, as he sat throned in Notre-Dame, robed and crowned, as he had wildly hoped, the Cæsar of a new universal empire that no evil genius had the power to syllable in his ear—with all the stern interpretation of the words—Moscow—St. Helena!

The following is appended to the above paper as a supplement:

TWO NAPOLEONIC RELICS.

A Paper read at the February meeting of the York Pioneer and Historical Society, 1895,

by the

REV. HENRY SCADDING, D. D.

We must all of us have remarked that in the dates which we have been familiarly using for several years past are the exact counterparts, if we substitute eight for seven, of dates with which we are very familiar as having been those of events of a striking character, occurring at the close of the last century. It seems a very little while ago, since we were using the dates 1889-92-94, and we could not help being reminded thereby of similar dates, 1789, storming of the Bastile, 1793-94, the Reign of Terror, and other dates marking dreadful events in the drama not yet entirely played out, known as the French Revolution.

We also here in Western Canada have had several centennial celebrations lately, that of the organization of the Province of Upper Canada, for example, and holding of its first Parliament in 1792, the laying out of York, i.e., Toronto, in 1793, and so forth; and in this year, 1895, we recall the close of the ever-memorable administration of Governor Simcoe in 1795.

How unaware were our forefathers of the startling events which were occurring in Europe at the very moment when they were acting and moving and making their mark on the soil of Canada here; and it is often well for us for our comfort and peace of mind, that we are not made acquainted with things that are happening at particular moments just outside our own sphere.

By a curious engraving which I happen to possess, I am reminded that about this time 100 years ago Napoleon Bonaparte was beginning to be the terror of Western Europe.

In three-years' time from 1795 he was seriously threatening England with invasion at the head of an overwhelming force. It was simply at the moment, perhaps, only a pretence just to spread alarm and to cover ulterior designs. He collected at St Malo, on the coast of Brittany, in France, an immense force, naval and military, ostensibly for the invasion of England; but in reality it was probably from the very outset intended simply to mask the attack upon Egypt, which he suddenly made in the year 1798, and which was so gallantly checkmated by Nelson at the Battle of the Nile.

It is in connection with the gathering of an armament for the alleged invasion of England that the old engraving in my possession has an interest. I have accordingly determined to exhibit it to you. It was found among the papers of my father, who, I know, set a particular value upon it as having been secured by him at the time of the great alarm felt in England at the prospect of an invasion by Napoleon Bonaparte. Moreover, it may not be inappropriate to do so in that the name and fame of Napoleon are at the present time undergoing a revival in consequence of the simultaneous publication of illustrated memoirs of Napoleon in several popular periodicals.

The print to which I refer professes to give a view of a huge raft as seen afloat at St. Malo in February, 1798, and was "published February 13, 1798, by John Fairburn, No. 146 Minories, London." This engraving represents the apparatus for conveying the expedition to the shores of England, consisting of a kind of gigantic ferry raft, bearing in the midst apparently a bomb-proof, metal-sheathed citadel and surmounted by a tall mast, bearing a flag somewhat resembling the tri-color of later years.

The whole raft is supposed to be propelled forward by means of four engines contained in the same number of low towers, situated two at each end: each engine turns a paddle-wheel of a large diameter, set in motion by a contrivance of six horizontal sweeps placed on the top of the towers, so as to be acted upon by the wind after the manner of the great sweep of a windmill, only moving not vertically, but as we have said horizontally.

We have here paddle-wheel propulsion of very large vessels, anticipated with wind instead of steam as the moving agent.

On the flat floor of the raft are seen squadrons of cavalry proceeding at full gallop, in perfect order, however, passing across the surface, having entered the great floating affair by a set of draw-bridges at one end, which can evidently be lifted up when the process of embarkation is completed, whilst a corresponding set of draw-bridges to be used for debarkation are seen at the other end already hauled up.

They are deploying round and passing into an arched entrance to quarters provided for them in the basement of the central fortress or citadel.

The engraving before us informs us that the extraordinary structure was 600 feet long by 300 broad, mounts 500 pieces of cannon, 36 and 48-pounders, and is to convey 15,000 troops, etc., for the invasion of England.

In the background is seen the Town of St. Malo, partially lining the shore, with adjoining heights, each crowned with a signal tower and flagstaff. Parkman, in his "Pioneers of France in the New World," page 181, thus describes the town of St. Malo:

"The ancient town of St. Malo, thrust out like a buttress into the sea, strange and grim of aspect, breathing war from its walls and battlements of rugged stone—a stronghold of privateers, the home of a race whose intractable and defiant independence neither time nor change has subdued—has been for centuries a nursery for hardy mariners."

Parkman then refers to Jacques Cartier, in whom Canadians are so much interested, inasmuch as it was from this port that he sailed on his famous voyage of discovery in the New World, April 20, 1534.

Parkman describes the portrait of Jacques Cartier preserved at St. Malo, now becomes familiar to all Canadians from Hamel's copy thereof.

Parkman informs us that it shows him as a man of bold, keen features, bespeaking a spirit not apt to quail before the wrath of man or the elements.

In the account appended to the engraving of the St. Malo raft, it should be subjoined, we are told, that a bomb-proof arrangement was made for the working of the paddle-wheels by horse-power, whenever the wind apparatus should be unavailable.

It may be added, too, that another great raft, the exact counterpart of the one described, is seen in the distance, putting out to sea, whilst a fleet lies in readiness in the harbor under the heights close by. Whether these formidable appliances for the invasion of England were ever constructed in all their completeness or not may be a question, but it is not improbable that we have in these pictures of them reproductions of adumbrations made in outline by the hand of the clever Engineer Napoleon himself.

After the abortive preparations of 1798 Napoleon still did not relinquish the designs which he had formed for the invasion of England. In the year 1804 he assembled an armament with the same object in view on a vast scale, but on this occasion not at St. Malo, but at the port of Boulogne, nineteen miles south-west of Calais.

In the meantime he had caused himself to be elected Emperor of the French.

His Army, which was styled the Army of England, now consisted, it is said, of 180,000 men, and a flotilla of 2,400 transports. Napoleon, fully confident of the success of this renewed attempt on England, had the die of a medal prepared, which was to be struck on his taking possession of London. The engraver was Jeuffroy, the designer was Denon, the device of the reverse was Hercules holding an amphibious monster in the air, half man and half sea-serpent, crushing it to death. The monster, of course, represented England, and Hercules was France.

In the mind of Napoleon and his artists the wish was doubtless father to the thought, but, as we know, it was not destined to be fulfilled.

The allusion in the device is to the mythological story of the destruction of Antæus by Hercules. Antæus, as the story goes, was the son of Neptune and Terra, and was powerless so long as he was kept from contact with Mother Earth, a contact he was ever desirous of repeating.

I exhibit the engraving of the medal thus described, which appears in Plate V., contained in Edward Edwards' Napoleon Medals, published in London by Paul and Dominic Colnaghi in 1837. At page 15 of that work we are informed that "the dies

of this medal were engraved in Paris, at the epoch when the expedition against England was preparing, and were intended to have been employed in London after the taking of that city."

As the expedition did not take place, the medal was never struck. Some impressions, however, in soft metal and fine plaster of Paris were made, and from them at a later period fac similes were derived, copies of which are occasionally found in the cabinets of the curious.

The medal bears the inscription in French, "Descente en Angleterre," i.e., "Attack on England," and below are the words "Frappée à Londres, 1804," i.e., "Struck at London in the year 1804." But London was not captured. The trained bands of London stood in the way, and more formidable still were the people of the three Kingdoms, linked together as one united phalanx for defence.

It is somewhat singular that a lofty and conspicuous column 164 feet in height should be seen to this day on the heights above Boulogne, recalling the memory of Napoleon's quixotic ideas in regard to the annexation of England to the Empire of France.

How noble is the future which offers itself to the British Empire throughout the globe, could its sons everywhere be induced to dwell together in unity, and on every critical occasion to act like their forefathers when a tyrant sought to lay a yoke upon their necks. In this way, what Shakespeare said of the limited England of his time will be fulfilled in the case of the greater England of to day, and still more in the case of the vaster and more compact British Empire of the following ages.

I close with a portion of his words to be found at the end of the famous tragedy of "King John," making therein the verbal change of "the Empire" for England:

"This Empire never did, nor never shall,
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.

* * * * * * * *

Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them. Nought shall make us rue,
Let but the Empire to itself, rest true."